

i grow green with hope by opheliahyde

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Summary:

Eddie and Richie go on a date—that is not actually a date, *obviously*—to the Canal Day carnival.

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Author's Note:

- For [scorpiod](#).

I had fully intended to get this up last night, but this story started out as another story that wanted to be much longer and *this story* became a lot longer than anticipated. I hope you don't mind!

Also, re: the underage warning: there are no specific ages mentioned or references to what age Eddie and Richie are. I imagine them as under eighteen, but old enough to drive (sixteen), but please feel free to apply your own ages, if you would prefer.

It's the last night of the Canal Day carnival and Eddie could feel it in the air, a cool breeze sweeping through the thick humidity as summer starts its slow descent into autumn. The end of the carnival had brought the citizens of Derry out after dark, crowd thick as he and Richie follow the other losers through the throng of bodies.

Richie knocks into Eddie, feigning an accidental bump—their hands brush, after Richie trails his fingertips down the bare skin of Eddie's arm, just enough to touch, Richie giving him a sideways glance and a crooked smile. Eddie grabs onto his hand, interlocking their fingers, jutting his chin up and keeping his eyes forward, not looking in Richie's direction as he lets a small gasp escape as Eddie squeezes his hand, not letting go. The sound makes Eddie grow warm through the middle and his stomach clench, so he rubs his thumb over the back of Richie's hand to hear it again.

"Boy, you sure are pushing it tonight, Eds," Richie says, bending low enough to murmur it in Eddie's ear, his hot breath making the back of Eddie's neck tingle.

Eddie lets their hands sway, then leans close to Richie's side, glancing up at him. "No one's going to notice in this crowd and even if they do, what are they going to do about it? Cause a public scene?" Eddie

grins, feeling Richie's fingers tighten through his own, knotting tight. "Just relax."

He watches Richie swallow heavy, Adam's apple bobbing up and down his long, slender neck; Eddie fights the urge to push up on the balls of his feet and put his mouth there, right under his chin, sucking a kiss into his pale skin. Richie doesn't let go, lets their fingers stay entwined as they follow behind Mike towards the game booths.

They went as a group, all seven of them, a Losers Club night out, which became the perfect cover, an excuse for him and Richie to hang out without attracting suspicion—they were there with their friends, it wasn't a *date* .

Except they both knew it totally was.

"He knows they're rigged, right?" Stan asks, sidling up to Eddie with his arms crossed; Eddie has been watching Richie try and throw darts at a board of balloons for the last half an hour, not popping a single one.

Eddie shrugs. "He says he needs to win, and that he's going to."

"Don't worry that pretty little head of yours," Richie calls over his shoulder, while the carnie piles up another three darts in front of Richie. "I'll get you that teddy bear of your heart's desire, honeypie."

Eddie flushes, but rolls his eyes, trying to act natural under Stan's pointed stare. "I don't even want the stupid fucking teddy bear, but he insists."

"Well," Stan says, clearing his throat as he lets his arms fall to his sides, looking between Richie's back and Eddie, sticking his hands in his jean pockets. "The rest of us are heading over to the food stands,

if you want to meet us— “

Stan is interrupted by a tell-tale *POP* , followed by the ringing of the bell as the carnie announces *WINNER WINNER* and Richie lets out a loud *WHOOP* . They watch as Richie raises his arms about his head and leaps, then points out the teddy bear he had nudged Eddie in the ribs and told him he was going to win for Eddie. Then Richie is loping over to them, long-legged strides also a skip, until he's standing in front of Eddie, arms outstretched, presenting his gift.

“What the fuck am I supposed to do with this?” Eddie asks, flattening his lips into a line to keep the corners from curling, Richie looking at him with a broad smile, carnival lights shining through the wild strands of his dark mop of hair.

“Love him because he loves you!” Richie says, voice high pitched, almost a squeal; Eddie is gifted with a face full of stuffed bear, its muzzle and hard plastic nose being pressed against his lips as Richie makes a loud, kissing noise— *MWAH* .

Eddie shoves the bear back, spitting out onto the ground, wiping his mouth with the back of his arm. “Do you have any *idea* how many parasites live on stuffed animals?”

Richie pouts, then pulls the bear into the crook of his arm, cradling it like a baby. “You're not diseased, are you? No, you're not, Eds is just a big meanie.”

“How much did that thing cost, anyway?” Stan asks, starting to move forward, Eddie following quickly behind.

Richie lifts the bear up above his head and settles its stuffed legs around his neck, letting the rest of the body fall forward, resting against Richie's hair. “Thirty-dollars, give or take,” Richie says, proudly.

“ *Unbelievable* ,” Stan breathes out, low enough for only Eddie to hear.

Eddie knew his mother wouldn't approve of any of the food at the carnival— *too much fat, salt, sugar, you're going to make you sick!* But Richie came back over with a few slices of pizza and a big cardboard, doggy dish of french fries and Eddie can't help his mouth watering, his stomach rumbling as Richie sets the food down in front of him. Richie shoves Eddie down on the bench of the picnic table, making room for himself as Beverly grins, before taking a bite of her hot dog.

"Where is Bernard?" Richie asks, passing Eddie his slice of pepperoni.

Eddie remembers the little girl eyeing the bear with an excessive sense of longing that was hard to ignore, so he handed it over to her capable hands. "I gave him away to a good home."

Richie gasps, loud and dramatic, scandalized. "How could you just give *our son* away?"

Beverly chokes, as Bill looks at them puzzled, mouthing *son?* at Eddie, while Mike and Stanley exchange a look that makes Eddie want to throw a couple of fries at them.

"He gave it to a sweet little girl," Ben chimes in, smiling in Richie's direction. "It was very nice of Eddie."

"Aw," Richie says, cooing, throwing his arm around Eddie's shoulders, tugging him closer to him; their thighs press together as Eddie locks their ankles together under the picnic table, the smell of Richie, musky and a bit rank from sweating in his clothes all day, more powerful than the smell of food around them. "My little Eds, such a softie."

Eddie shakes his head, feeling his cheeks burn; he picks up a fry, swirling it in the pool of ketchup gathered against the edge of the

bowl, lifting it up in front of Richie. “Shut up and eat,” Eddie says, trembling when Richie opens up his mouth around the fry and his lips wrap around the tips of Eddie’s fingers for a moment, until Eddie lets go, and Richie chews then swallows.

He can feel five sets of eyes on him, so Eddie keeps his eyes downcast towards his paper plate.

No one says anything when Richie continues to eat one-handed, his arm draped over Eddie’s shoulders the entire time. No one makes a comment on how Eddie picks up his food without washing his hands after Richie’s lips had been on them. Beverly diverts the attention away from them, asking the group where they wanted to head next, and Eddie eases into the pleasant commotion of conversation around him, leaning against Richie’s side.

He and Richie stand next in line for the ferris wheel, after Eddie had tugged Richie past the tilt-a-whirl where Beverly had gotten Bill and Ben to line up with her, whispering, “No, Rich, no fast, spinny ride yet, we just ate.” But that wasn’t the whole reason, and they both knew it.

Eddie had managed with success to be a few people in front of where Stan and Mike had lined up, tickets in hand. Eddie couldn’t do what he wanted, what he planned on doing, if they were in the seat directly behind them.

Richie lets him step first into the seat and settle down before he slips in beside him, rocking the seat until he leans back against the bench, pulling the guardrail over their laps and latching it. Eddie’s stomach flips over, butterflies fluttering hard when the wheel shifts them upwards, letting himself slide down the lacquered bench, tucking himself under Richie’s arm. He draws his arm back around his

shoulders with their fingers intertwined, resting against Eddie's shoulder.

"This is nice," Richie breathes out as the wheel moves them another notch higher, hoisting them above the carnival, above Derry. "Almost feels—"

"—safe?" Eddie offers, tilting his head towards Richie. "I know what you mean. Like it's normal, the two of us here, even in Derry, like we can just *be*."

Richie leans down and brushes his mouth across Eddie's temple, before pressing a kiss there. "I'm glad you came out tonight, even if it took a fight with Mrs. K. You were very brave, standing up to her."

Eddie can still hear echoes of the screaming match he had with his mother hours before, how she hadn't wanted him to go to the carnival— *do you know what could happen to you there? Crowds like that, you could get mugged, or worse* — hadn't wanted him going with Richie— *you're going to see that awful boy, aren't you? He's going to keep you out at all hours of the night while I'm here alone, worried sick. You're killing me, Edward! You're killing your mother.*

All he said was *I'm going and you can't stop me* , and *don't wait up* , then he ran out the door and fled into Richie's car, already idling outside his house, his mother following him out and watching them drive away from the porch.

"I'm not brave," he says, burrowing closer to Richie's side, lifting his mouth to his jawline, pressing his mouth there. "I'm just tired."

"Well, say the word, and we'll take off," Richie says, like he always says, joking but with an undercurrent of dead seriousness that Eddie clings to. "Just you and me, babe, we'll put this town in the dust."

Eddie reaches up, cupping his hand around Richie's cheek, turning his face towards Eddie's. "That's a nice dream," he breathes out, before surging up against Richie, shoving their mouths together.

Richie moans against his mouth and Eddie swallows it down inside himself, twisting against the guardrail to get closer, sucking on

Richie's tongue when he lets it slide against his own, licking into Eddie's mouth, warm and wet, still sugar-sticky from the fried dough they shared. "I've wanted to do this all night," Eddie says, pulling back a moment to catch his breath, hand resting over Richie's thundering heart. "But there was nowhere safe."

"So you dragged me on the ferris wheel to make out?" Richie laughs, half-hysterical. "You could have just said you wanted to get out of here."

Eddie shakes his head, stroking his thumb in circles over the thin cotton of Richie's t-shirt, feeling how warm he is underneath. "And pass on kissing you on top of a ferris wheel? Not a chance."

Richie tilts Eddie's chin upwards, pressing their mouths back together in quick, chaste kisses, peppered over his lips. "You horny little sap," Richie says, letting his hand drift down until Eddie can feel his hand grip the top of his thigh, fingertips brushing the line of his cock, thickening in his shorts. "You better calm down before we get off this thing, or else everyone will have a lot of questions about your love of ferris wheels."

Eddie chokes, can't stop the laughter from bubbling up out of his throat, trying to snuff it out against Richie's neck. Richie's arms come around Eddie as he shakes, giggling into Richie's shoulder, breathing him in on every deep inhale as his ribs start to ache.

They sit like that until Eddie settles, breathing in and out, Richie toying with the ends of Eddie's hair at the nape of his neck, the two of them looking out across Derry, lights flickering in the night, melting into shadow towards the barrens, the end of Neibolt street.

From up on high, everything looks so small.

Eddie and Richie say goodbye to the other losers, cutting out early.

Mike drags Eddie into a long, firm hug, arms wrapped tight around him like Mike might not see him again—that's just his way, love for his friends pouring out of his pores, unable to stop himself from expressing it. “You sure you don’t want to stay?” Mike asks, when he lets Eddie go, hands still resting on his shoulders. “You’re going to miss the fireworks!”

Eddie gives him a half-hearted smile and a shrug. “You know my mom would kill me if I stayed out past curfew. Tell me about them later?” His heart flutters like a bird in a cage, beating hard—it wasn’t technically a lie, but enough of one that makes his stomach twist with guilt.

Mike ruffles his hair, then lets him go, moving on to give Richie the same treatment. “You make sure that one gets home safe, okay?” Mike says, pointing at Eddie.

“Yeah,” Stan says, voice dry, looking between them like he was struggling not to say something more. “Bring Eddie home in one piece.”

Eddie watches Richie stare at Stan, their gazes locked for a moment too long, a silent conversation passing between them—then the moment passes, Richie hooking his arm around Eddie’s neck, steering him around in the opposite direction of their friends, the two of them breaking away and trekking back towards Richie’s car.

“Stanley knows, doesn’t he?” Eddie asks, once they’ve slid into the car and slammed the heavy steel doors shut.

Richie grips the steering wheel, his knuckles turning white. “Yeah, Stanley might have figured it out, goddamn observant fucker that he is.” Richie turns his head, looking at Eddie from behind his glasses, lenses shining from the glow of the carnival. “Let me get you home, okay?”

The car’s engine rolls over when Richie turns the key in the ignition, the dulcet tones of The Cure drifting from the speakers at a low volume, Richie’s radio tuned to the Portland alternative station

instead of one of his tapes. Eddie slides across the bench seat, reaching out to touch his forearm.

“I don’t want to go home,” he whispers in Richie’s ear. “Please don’t take me home.”

Richie switches gear and reverses the car, nodding as Eddie slides back across the seat, snapping the seatbelt around himself.

They don’t drive past his street, or Richie’s, just head Eastward through town until the houses start to thin; Richie finds the dead end road they stumbled upon one time, driving around, that turns off onto an unkempt dirt road, that leads to a vacant field. Eddie feels like the place is theirs, all their own, if only because he’s never seen anyone come around. Richie switches the car into park and turns off the engine, kills the headlights, so it’s just them in the shadows, moonlight drifting through the car windows.

Richie never makes the first move—for as long as they’ve been doing this, Richie still hesitates, still *waits*, showing off a level of inexplicable patience that might drive Eddie crazy one day—so Eddie unhooks the seatbelt and crawls across the bench, tugging Richie from behind the wheel until he is centered enough for Eddie to throw a leg over his lap and settle down on top of him.

“I’ve been wanting to do this all night,” Eddie says, pulling Richie’s glasses from his face, folding them up and placing them on the dashboard behind him.

Richie laughs, his breath coming out in pants against Eddie’s throat as he kisses up from Eddie’s collarbone, to behind his ear. “If I knew carnivals turned you on so much, we’d have gone every night.”

“Shut the fuck up,” Eddie says, no heat in his voice, a whine building in his throat when he feels Richie’s hands stroke up his bare thighs, then over his hips and under his shirt, long fingers laddering up Eddie’s spine. “Or I’ll make you.”

“Please, *please* make me,” Richie begs, exaggerated tone unable to conceal the lust, thick on his tongue. Richie’s hands fall to Eddie’s ass, cupping and squeezing his cheeks, making Eddie’s shorts ride up

and bunch, his cock straining at the front. “Fuck, you wore these to make me crazy, didn’t you?”

Eddie doesn’t confirm or deny, just reaches behind, tugging his shirt off from the back of the collar and dropping it in the passenger’s side footwell. “You’re still talking too much.” Eddie leans off Richie’s lap, liking the way he tries to draw him back, hands on his hips, his waist, bending over Eddie to kiss up the side of his rib cage while Eddie reaches into the glove compartment and fishes out what he was looking for. Richie looks dumbstruck when he presses the bottle of lube into his hand.

“When did you put that in there?” he asks, voice small; Eddie feels him start to tremble, his cock growing harder under the zipper of his jeans.

Eddie rocks his hips forward, grinding down until Richie gasps, jerking underneath him. Eddie presses close, liking the way the front of Richie’s shirt feels against his bare skin, buttons scraping up against his chest, making his nipples pucker. Richie’s hair is a bit greasy between his fingers, but soft enough when he runs his fingers through, brushing his mouth against his ear. “Does it matter?” he asks.

Richie swallows, then shakes his head, drawing Eddie’s mouth to his with his hands cupped around his face, Eddie’s jaw cradled in Richie’s palms as his thumbs stroke over his cheekbones. Richie licks into his mouth, languid and filthy, sucking on Eddie bottom lip, the tender, gentle touch of his hands combined with Richie kissing him slow and deep makes Eddie start to tremble, heat building in his gut, spreading to his groin.

Eddie pulls back, pinning Richie to the seat with his hands flat across his shoulders, but keeping his head bowed, their foreheads touching; Eddie can breathe him in like this, the heady, musky scent of his skin, sweat eroding away what was left of the cologne he must have splashed on before he left for the night. Eddie fights the urge to lick him, see if he tastes the same.

“Backseat—we should move this to the backseat,” he says, grinning when Richie nods.

Eddie lets go and gets to his knees, straddling Richie's lap until he moves up and over his shoulder, his thighs trembling as Richie's hand drags down his flank as he climbs over the seat, launching himself into the back of Richie's car. Richie keeps it clean, no trash or discarded fast food bags, his car his pride and joy, kept more spotless than his room. Eddie would roll his eyes, but he's grateful for the lack of mess in times like this. When he falls back against the seat, he kicks off his shoes and starts to shimmy out of his shorts, hooking his fingers in his briefs and dragging both down his legs, letting out a small sob of relief when his cock springs free.

"Jesus," Richie groans, watching from the front seat.

Eddie drops his shorts and underwear over his shoes, then he stretches forward, getting a grip on Richie's shirt collar, pushing the outer shirt off his shoulders. Richie tosses the lube over the seat, letting it land beside Eddie. "Quit staring and get back here," he says, pleased when the first layer is shed, yanking Richie's t-shirt over his head, then tossing it behind him as he grabs onto his arms, pulling him under. They fall back onto the seat, Richie's body heavy, pressing Eddie down onto the cracked leather.

Richie shakes with laughter, brushing Eddie's curls back off his brow as Eddie giggles under him, his back starting to stick to the leather. Richie's jeans are still on and rub between the insides of Eddie's thighs, his legs falling open, splayed out around Richie's hips, hissing when the fly of his jeans grazes his cock, no protection of his shorts in between. "Take your pants off already, Tozier," Eddie says, arching under him, letting his cock rub up against the rough denim.

Eddie gets his hands between their bodies and flicks open the button on Richie's jeans, moving on towards the zipper, but Richie grabs his wrists, pins his hands around his head. "I'll get there, but we're not going to get far if you don't let me prep you first." Richie laughs when Eddie tries to buck under him—they both knew Richie could use his size and weight against Eddie if he wanted, but he only ever chose to do so when it suited him, leaving Eddie trying to wriggle out of his grip. "Be patient."

Richie slips down Eddie's body before he lets go of his hands, drawing them to rest across the back of his head as Richie sucks a

row of marks across the base of Eddie's throat, dragging his lips further down, licking Eddie's nipples as he cries out and pulls on Richie's hair under his hands. Richie travels slow down his body, peppering kisses down Eddie's sternum and then his stomach, the tip of his tongue swirling in Eddie's belly button, making Eddie grimace in disgust, but his cock starts to leak, dripping down his shaft.

Richie's hands slide down his shins, pushing his legs up by his ankles. "Bend your knees, keep your legs open for me, okay?"

Eddie should be used to this by now, but he sucks in a deep, shuddering breath, feeling the flush burning in his cheeks start creep down his chest; he's aware of how exposed he is, how Richie can see everything, all of him, as he fits himself between Eddie's thighs, broad shoulders keeping his legs apart. Eddie hears the sound of the lube cap opening, the click of it closing, but then his body arches up on the leather seat. "Fuck," he cries out, not expecting the senstation of Richie's hot mouth sucking around the head of his cock as his slick fingers circle around his hole, before pushing in.

Richie glances up between his legs, eyes turned midnight blue in the dark, locking on Eddie's as his tongue slips out, swirling around the head of Eddie's cock as Eddie feels another finger breech him. Richie curls and opens his fingers, fucking three of them inside of Eddie now, white-hot pleasure sparkling up his spine. "I am not going to last if you keep going like that," Eddie gasps out, reaching down to push at Richie's head, trying to get his mouth off his cock. "I want to come with you inside me, come on, stop!"

"Sorry," Richie says, licking his lips, then giving Eddie a crooked grin. "I just wanted a taste."

Eddie feels his stomach swoop, then clench and tries to keep his breathing under control, just trying to push a little longer. They never kept condoms around—Richie had stopped offering to put one on a while back when Eddie insisted it was pointless, since they were each other's firsts; later, Eddie told him it was because he liked the feeling of Richie inside him, with nothing in between.

Richie crawls over him, his jeans already kicked off his legs and dropped onto the floor of the car and Eddie can feel how wet his cock

is when it drags against his thigh as Richie tries to line it up. Eddie moves his hands from Richie's hair to his shoulders, nails digging in when he feels the stretch of Richie's cock at his entrance—then a gasp gets punched out of him, Richie's hips jerking forward, thrusting in too quick, making Eddie's eyes water.

"Sorry, sorry, sorry," Richie pants, running his thumbs under Eddie's eyes, brushing the tears away. "I can stop, we can stop, I'm so sor—"

Eddie cuts him off with a hard press of his lips, kissing him until he melts against him, lips falling open to let Eddie inside. The sharp pain gives way to a pleasant ache, a burning stretch that Eddie can't help but work his hips against. "You can fuck me now," he says, kissing Richie's temple.

He braces himself for the drag of Richie's cock as he pulls back, but instead, Richie's hands grip him around the waist, flipping them over until Eddie sits astride his hips, Richie's cock sinking deeper inside. "I wanna watch you," Richie says, running his hands up and down the tops of Eddie's thighs. "Please?"

Eddie knows it's more than that, Richie unable to trust himself, so he lets Eddie set the pace, lets Eddie ride him until they both come—it's okay with him, Eddie likes being on top, likes Richie's eyes on him when he lifts his hips and drops them back down, Richie getting to see where they're joined, where Richie is sinking deep inside Eddie, but sometimes he can't help but wish Richie would just hold him down and take. Another time, maybe. Eddie is brought back to his body when his hips start to stutter on their own, setting an erratic pace until he leans forward and rests his hands on Richie's chest for leverage.

Then he starts to move.

He doesn't last long, already too keyed up, edging towards the brink, but he fucks himself on Richie's cock, rocking back and forth, trying to lift himself and bounce, but Richie presses up inside him, against that fucking sweet spot when he leans forward and Eddie feels himself shake apart with a sob, clenching around Richie as he comes over his stomach and chest in spurts.

He wants to collapse onto Richie, lay on his chest through the aftershocks, but he hasn't felt him come, hasn't felt him spill inside him and fill him up, so he keeps moving, pleasure dancing with pain, until Richie arches under him, grabbing him by the back of the head and hauling him into a kiss as his hips jerk up into Eddie. Richie's orgasm works like a feedback loop, feeding pleasure back into Eddie's body, setting him off again, coming dry around Richie's pulsating cock, feeling his come drip out of him, Richie's mouth still pressed to his own.

Eddie lets himself fall onto Richie after, curling up on his chest, despite the sticky mess of his release sliding between their bodies, almost liking the sensation—evidence of the mess they made of each other. “Thank you,” Eddie says, tucking his head under Richie’s chin.

Richie kisses the top of his sweat-damp hair, then enfolds Eddie in his arms, letting them drift off to sleep, curled up in the backseat.

Eddie’s eyes blink open to the car being filled with a dull glow, his cheek sticking to Richie’s chest as it rises and falls. He tries to shift carefully, peeling his face away from Richie’s skin and glancing up to meet Richie gazing down at him, bemused smile playing at his lips. “It’s morning—or almost. Welcome back to the land of the living, Eds.”

“Were you watching me sleep?” he asks, closing his eyes for a few breaths, nuzzling along Richie’s throat, burrowing against him, seeking warmth. “That’s a little creepy.”

“Can’t help it,” Richie says, around a yawn, “you’re just too adorable.”

Eddie muffles a laugh against Richie’s skin, feeling his cheeks flush, then he shifts his head up, resting his chin on Richie’s sternum.

“Sun’s coming up, wanna watch that instead?”

“Are you sure you’re my Eds? Have you switched bodies with Stan? Possibly Mike?” Richie says, grinning.

Eddie slaps his chest as he pushes himself up. “I sure hope you’re not fucking Stan or Mike like you fuck me.” They’ve fogged up the windows, obscuring them from the view outside.

Richie moves with him, the leather seat creaking under their weight as they untangle themselves. “No, unfortunately you’re the only one for me, you’ve ruined me for all other men,” Richie teases, unlocking the door and opening it up to stretch his legs, letting in the damp early morning air, cool enough to make Eddie shiver.

Eddie snatches Richie’s t-shirt before he makes a grab for it, slipping it over his head and lets it fall down around him—it hangs loose, sliding off a shoulder as it brushes the tops of his thighs. Sliding out of the car, he can still feel the squelch of Richie’s release, the last remnants dripping out of him, spilling onto the leather seat as the dried bits flake off his thighs.

He walks around the car, hating the feel of the wet grass under his feet, but he needs to grab something to wipe down with. He uses his t-shirt, running it between his legs until he feels a little cleaner, watching Richie slide into his jeans from behind the open car door. He doesn’t pick up his other shirt, just stands up, stretching his arms over his head as Eddie gets caught staring at the way his muscles move under his skin, how he stretches his long torso, the hair that trails from his belly button down into his jeans.

“Put on a shirt,” Eddie snaps, no bite, too busy blushing.

Richie barks out a laugh. “Can’t, you stole it. Looks good on you, though.”

Eddie balls up his dirty t-shirt and throws it back on into the foot well, then climbs into the car, reaching for Richie’s glasses and grabbing them off the dashboard, handing them to Richie. “Maybe you need your glasses.”

Richie slips his glasses on his face, looking dressed for now, despite the lack of shirt. “Nope,” he says, shaking his head. “Still cute.”

Eddie slams the front door closed, then turns toward the front of the car that shakes when Richie closes his door. Eddie hoists himself up on the hood of Richie’s car, tracking bits of grass and mud with him, but Richie doesn’t seem to mind, climbing up with him and meeting Eddie in the middle. Richie sits with his legs stretched out towards the sun starting to peak over the trees as Eddie curls up beside him, drawing his legs up to his chest under Richie’s t-shirt. He still aches, pulsating and deep.

They sit like that in the quiet, listening to the trill of birds and the song of crickets. Richie scoots closer until he can drape an arm around Eddie, drawing him against his overheated skin. Eddie feels Richie’s head drop against his own.

“You know, I was serious, we can get out of here,” Richie starts, sucking in a heavy breath. “I got a car. We can find some place better, bigger than Derry.”

Eddie can imagine it, packing up what he can and taking off in the middle of the night, can almost taste that freedom on his tongue, hear the loud hustle and bustle of a city they could disappear into. But he can’t stop the clench of his stomach, turning it to knots, worry clawing at his insides, making him sick.

A sickness called his mother.

“Shh,” Eddie whispers, leaning down to kiss the side of Richie’s neck. “No talking.”

Richie doesn’t bring it up again.